

DOCUMENT RESUME

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AUTHOR Brause, Rita S.
TITLE Comprehension of Ambiguous and Other Polysemous Utterances: Presented in Written Mode.
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NOTE 9p.; For related documents, see CS 207 904-945. CS 207 941 is the spoken mode of this instrument. Print is broken and may not reproduce well.
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ABSTRACT

Designed to assess comprehension of written ambiguous and polysemous structures, this instrument is a series of written statements that include varying degrees and types of ambiguity. In the first part of the test students are asked to identify (from a choice of three) semantically acceptable paraphrases for an initial sentence. Then students must independently paraphrase in writing all of the meanings in the same set of sentences. In the final part of the test, students are asked to independently paraphrase nine sentences. Comprehension of a structure is demonstrated by two acceptable interpretations out of the three items testing each aspect of ambiguity. (This document is one of those reviewed in The Research Instrument Project (TRIP) monograph "Measures for Research and Evaluation in the English Language Arts, Volume 2," published by the Committee on Research of the National Council of Teachers of English in cooperation with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills. The TRIP review, included here as an introduction to the instrument, describes the instrument's category (language), title, author, date, age range (ages 10-16), purpose, and physical characteristics.) (HTH)

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ED236663

Comprehension of Ambiguous and Other Polysemous
Utterances: Presented in Written Mode.

The measurement instruments contained in this document have been reviewed in a monograph (cited below) edited by William T. Fagan, Charles Cooper, and Julie Jensen, for The Research Instruments Project (TRIP), and funded by a grant from the Trustees of the NCTE Research Foundation:

Measures for Research and Evaluation
in the
English Language Arts
Volume II

The purpose of the editors has been to select and review measurement instruments pertaining to all aspects of research and evaluation in the English language arts, e.g. language and language development, literacy, literature, reading (including comprehension, teacher-pupil interaction, etc.), writing, and teacher knowledge and attitudes. In order to make some of the actual instruments reviewed more readily available, the ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills (ERIC/RCS) has cooperated with the editors by processing selected instruments into the ERIC system (see the 42 documents assigned Clearinghouse accession numbers CS 207 904-945).

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CS 207938

Category: Language and Language Development

Title: Comprehension of Ambiguous and Other Polysemous Utterances:
Presented in Written Mode

Author: Rita S. Brause

Age Range: Ages 10-16

Description of Instrument:

Purpose: To assess comprehension of written ambiguous and polysemous structures.

Date of Construction: 1979

Physical Description: Three items assess comprehension of each of the following structures: 1) one meaning of a word in an unambiguous context, 2) a second meaning of the same word in an unambiguous context 3) multiplicity of pronoun referents, 4) figurative language, 5) symbolic language of proverbs, 6) lexical ambiguity, 7) surface structure ambiguity, and 8) deep structure ambiguity. This written test assesses comparable structures and follows the same design of presentation as "Comprehension of Ambiguous and Other Polysemous Utterances: Presented in Spoken Mode" found elsewhere in this volume. In the first part of the test students are asked to identify semantically acceptable paraphrases for an initial sentence:

Mom, we finished all of the soda.

- ☐ a. We drank up all the soda.
 - ☐ b. There isn't any soda in the house to drink.
 - ☐ c. Where is the soda?
-

Then students must independently paraphrase in writing all of the meanings in the same set of sentences. In the final part of the test, students are asked to independently paraphrase nine sentences, e.g., "Most people wear clean socks and shoes." Comprehension of a structure is demonstrated by two acceptable interpretations out of the three items testing each aspect of ambiguity.

Validity, Reliability and Normative Data:

The hypothesized sequence of development (Brause, 1975, 1977) of a listener's ability to comprehend ambiguous and polysemous utterances based on the findings assessing comprehension in a spoken mode was supported in this study; there were no invariant cases. Content validity is based upon the selection of sentences from theoretical and empirical sources such as Piaget and C. Chomsky. An inter-rater reliability coefficient of .94 was obtained by comparing the scores of two independent judges on five participants' responses.

Related Documents:

Brause, Rita S. "Comprehension of Ambiguous Sentences Presented in Spoken and Written Modes." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, California, April 1979.

Brause, Rita S. "Developmental Aspects of the Ability to Understand Semantic Ambiguity, with Implications for Teachers." Research in the Teaching of English 11 (Spring 1977): 39-48. (EJ 160 312)

Brause, Rita S. "On Ambiguity: An Investigation of the Development of the Ability to Understand Semantic Ambiguity." Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1975. Dissertation Abstracts International 36. (1975). 2173-A.

1. THE FANS WERE EXCITED.
 - _____ a. Fans are people who admire a certain hero.
 - _____ b. Fans are machines used to make the air more comfortable.

2. MOM, WE FINISHED ALL OF THE SODA.
 - _____ a. We drank up all the soda.
 - _____ b. There isn't any soda in the house to drink.
 - _____ c. Where is the soda?

3. THE FANS WERE USEFUL IN COOLING THE AIR.
 - _____ a. Fans are people who admire a certain hero.
 - _____ b. Fans are machines used to make the air more comfortable.

4. CHARLIE TOLD LINUS THAT SNOOPY WOULD VISIT HIM.
 - _____ a. Charlie told Linus that Snoopy would visit Linus.
 - _____ b. Charlie told Linus that Snoopy would visit Charlie.
 - _____ c. Charlie told Linus that Snoopy would visit both of them.

5. THERE ARE FORKS IN THE ROAD.
 - _____ a. Forks, spoons and knives were on the highway.
 - _____ b. The road divides into two new roads.
 - _____ c. People use forks when eating picnic lunches on the road.

6. DON'T CRY OVER SPILLED MILK.

- ___ a. Don't let spilled milk make you unhappy.
- ___ b. You can't change what's happened in the past.
- ___ c. Crying over spilled milk doesn't change anything.

7. THE FANS WERE SO NOISY THAT NOBODY COULD HEAR THE MUSIC.

- ___ a. Fans are people who admire a certain hero.
- ___ b. Fans are machines used to make the air more comfortable.
- ___ c. Fans are noisy cars used on the highways.

8. BURNING PAPER CAN BE DANGEROUS.

- ___ a. Starting a paper fire can be dangerous.
- ___ b. Paper burns can be dangerous.
- ___ c. Paper which has been set on fire can be dangerous.

9. LUCY LIKES THE SWIMMING TEACHER MORE THAN CHARLIE.

- ___ a. Lucy likes the swimming teacher more than she likes Charlie Brown.
- ___ b. Lucy likes Charlie more than Charlie likes the swimming teacher.
- ___ c. Lucy likes the swimming teacher more than Charlie likes the swimming teacher.

10. THE PAINTER USED ROSE PAINT IN THE LIVING ROOM.

- ___ a. Rose is a color.
- ___ b. Rose is a flower.
- ___ c. Rose is a girl's name.

11. IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR SCHOOL, CHARLIE BROWN.

- ☐ a. Hurry up, before you're late for school, Charlie!
- ☐ b. School is almost over, Charlie.
- ☐ c. It is nearing the first day of school after summer vacation is over.

12. I CAN SMELL A ROSE FROM A DISTANCE OF FIVE FEET.

- ☐ a. Rose is a color.
- ☐ b. Rose is a flower.
- ☐ c. Rose is a girl's name.

13. MICKEY YAWNED WHEN HE SAT DOWN.

- ☐ a. Mickey yawned when his girl friend Minnie sat down.
- ☐ b. Mickey yawned when Mickey himself sat down.
- ☐ c. Mickey yawned when Donald Duck sat down.

14. LUCY HAS A FROG IN HER THROAT.

- ☐ a. Lucy has a pet frog which she carries in her throat.
- ☐ b. Lucy's voice sounds strange.
- ☐ c. There is a special part of the throat which is called a frog.

15. THE SQUEAKY WHEEL GETS THE GREASE.

- ☐ a. A squealer makes a lot of money.
- ☐ b. A mechanic puts oil only on the wheel that is making noise when it turns.
- ☐ c. Noise which is unpleasant cannot be ignored.

16. ROSE IS MY FAVORITE.

- ___ a. Rose is a color.
- ___ b. Rose is a game.
- ___ c. Rose is a flower.
- ___ d. Rose is a girl's name.

17. HE WENT TO GET THE RED CRAYON BOX.

- ___ a. The crayon box was red.
- ___ b. The box was filled only with red crayons.
- ___ c. The box had crayons and paints in it.

18. CHARLIE WANTS TO BE TALLER THAN LINUS.

- ___ a. Charlie wants to grow up to be 6 feet 5 inches tall; Linus only wants to be 6 feet tall.
- ___ b. Linus is shorter than Charlie.
- ___ c. Charlie wants to be a taller person than Linus is now.

19. In the Spring, I will plant seeds to grow flowers.
20. The door is open.
21. The plant that my friend works at is near the river.
22. If he wins the race, Pluto will be very happy.
23. My sister is a tightly sealed envelope.
24. One man's meat may be another man's poison.
25. The plant is large.
26. Most people wear clean socks and shoes.
27. The shooting of the policeman was very surprising.